



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

January 7, 2010

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

**SUBJECT: QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT ON BOARD MOTION REGARDING
PROGRESS OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OAK WOODLANDS
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
(October 7, 2008, Item 95-C)**

On October 7, 2008 your Board requested appropriate County staff to participate in the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program and instructed the Director of Planning to facilitate actions to assist the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (Resource Conservation District) in its preparation of the Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan (Oak Woodlands Plan). The Resource Conservation District convened a working group called the Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Strategic Alliance (Strategic Alliance) to assist in the preparation of the plan. The Los Angeles County Fire Department and Department of Regional Planning provide technical advice to the Strategic Alliance. This fifth quarterly status report summarizes the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan.

Since the last quarterly report on the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan was delivered to your Board on October 7, 2009 the Strategic Alliance completed the Draft Oak Woodlands Plan on October 27, 2009 and held five community meetings during November and December to get public input on the Plan. Working exclusively with the \$50,000 allocation from your Board, the Strategic Alliance has expended \$40,452 to date in the preparation of the plan.

The Draft Oak Woodlands Plan can be accessed at www.lacountyOakwoodlandplan.org and questions and comments about the Plan can be sent to lacoakplan@gmail.com. Maps that have been prepared especially for the Plan can be found on the website and represent the complex and fruitful collaborative effort between Regional Planning GIS

staff and Strategic Alliance member Dr. Tom Scott of University of California, Riverside. These maps illustrate oak woodland types and potential oak woodland zones.

The purpose of the Draft Oak Woodlands Plan is to:

- Preserve southern California's vital and rapidly shrinking oak woodlands.
- Create a vision of what oak woodland resources in Los Angeles County will look like in 50 years.
- Balance the regulatory elements of the existing Oak Tree Protection Ordinance with incentives to encourage voluntary conservation and expansion of oak woodlands.
- Allow access to the State of California Oak Woodland Conservation Fund to encourage preservation and expansion of oak woodlands.
- Facilitate uniform evaluation of land development projects' impacts on oak woodlands.
- Educate the public about the many benefits derived from healthy oak woodlands.
- Provide guidance for balancing the long-term housing needs of the County with conservation and enhancement of oak woodlands.

The Draft Oak Woodlands Plan has been modeled on the adopted Yolo County Oak Woodland and Conservation Enhancement Plan, which meets the requirements of the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to implement the 2001 California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. The 2001 California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program recognizes the critical role that private landowners have in the conservation of oaks and supports and encourages voluntary, long-term private stewardship and conservation of California oak woodlands by offering landowners financial incentives to protect and promote biologically functional oak woodlands. Specifically, the WCB is authorized to purchase oak woodland conservation easements and provide grants for land improvements and restoration efforts in counties with an adopted Oak Woodlands Management Plan.

To gather public input on the Draft Oak Woodlands Plan the Strategic Alliance conducted five community meetings during November and December 2009 at the following locations:

- Placerita Canyon Nature Center, November 10
- Steinmetz Park, November 18
- Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, November 19
- Eaton Canyon Nature Center, December 9
- Leona Valley Town Council, December 14

In addition to the community meetings, the outreach strategy of the Strategic Alliance included establishment of a website and an email address for comment submission, a

press release, and creation of an informational flyer that was distributed to via email to an extensive network of stakeholders identified by the Strategic Alliance. To date, there have been a total of 3329 hits on the Oak Woodlands Plan website. Media coverage of the Draft Oak Woodlands Plan appeared in the December 3, 2009 edition of the *Topanga Messenger*. Comments on the Draft Oak Woodlands Plan will be taken through early February 2010, including input from planning professionals identified by the Strategic Alliance. The Strategic Alliance will then review the comments, revise the Plan, and post it on the website before the end of April 2010. The Strategic Alliance intends to present the Oak Woodlands Plan to the County in spring 2010 for consideration of its role in the protection and preservation of oak woodlands in Los Angeles County.

The Strategic Alliance has not been deterred by the State budget crisis that has prevented receipt of grant funding from the WBC to match the \$50,000 your Board provided to assist in the preparation of the Oak Woodlands Plan. Instead, the Strategic Alliance has drawn extensively upon the expertise of its membership to augment the funding provided by your Board.

The next quarterly report on the progress of the Oak Woodlands Plan will be delivered April 7, 2010.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Mark Herwick of my staff at (213) 974-6423 or by email at mherwick@planning.lacounty.gov. Our office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. We are closed on Fridays.

JS:RCH:MSH

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